

1 ^{251A} 18. A method for automatically **[interpreting]** processing an electronic mail (E-mail)
2 message, comprising the steps of:
3 (a) receiving the E-mail from a source over an electronic data communications channel;
4 (b) interpreting the E-mail using a rule base and case base knowledge engine; and
5 (c) classifying the E-mail as at least one of (i) being able to be responded to automatically;
6 and (ii) requiring assistance from a human operator; wherein
7 when the classification indicates that the E-mail can be responded to automatically, the
8 method further includes the steps of:
9 (d) retrieving one or more predetermined responses from a repository;
10 (e) formulating an E-mail response from the predetermined response; and
11 (f) transmitting the E-mail response to the source over the data communications channel.

1 ^{251B} 19. A method for automatically **[interpreting]** processing a non-interactive electronic
2 message using a computer, comprising the steps of:
3 (a) receiving the electronic message from a source;
4 (b) interpreting the electronic message using a rule base and case base knowledge engine;
5 and
6 (c) retrieving one or more predetermined responses corresponding to the interpretation of
7 the electronic message from a repository for automatic delivery to the source.

1 ^{251C} 20. A system for automatically **[interpreting]** processing a non-interactive electronic
2 message received from a source, the system comprising:
3 a server for transmitting and receiving electronic messages over a communications
4 channel;
5 an inbox storage device for storing incoming electronic messages;
6 a knowledge engine including a rule base and a case base, the case base having a plurality
7 of stored cases representing past received electronic messages;
8 a pre-processor for receiving the electronic message and interpreting the electronic
9 message using the rule base;